

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BANGKO 05459 141123Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----141124Z 022193 /17

P 140800Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0041

S E C R E T BANGKOK 5459

NODIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, US, TH
SUBJ: FUTURE OF MAP FOR THAILAND

REF: (A) STATE 55153 (B) STATE 44414 (C) STATE 43000 (D) STATE 41170

1. I AM SATISFIED THAT THE TERMINATION OF MAP TO THAILAND AFTER FY-78 WILL NOT COME AS A MAJOR SHOCK TO THE RTG. THE THAI HAVE BEEN AWARE FOR SOME TIME, PRIMARILY THROUGH CONTACTS BETWEEN JUSMAGTHAI AND THE THAI ARMED FORCES, THAT GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE WAS NEARING AN END. TERMINATION AT THE END OF FY-77, HOWEVER, WOULD BE RECEIVED WITH SOME CONCERN BECAUSE THE THAI TEND TO VIEW U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS AN INDICATOR OF U.S. INTEREST IN SEA, IN GENERAL, AND THAILAND IN PARTICULAR, AND BECAUSE THEY ARE AWARE THAT FY-78 MAP FOR THAILAND ALREADY HAS BEEN PROPOSED. TERMINATING MAP TO THAILAND, WHETHER AFTER FY-78 OR FY-77, WOULD BE ACCEPTED MORE EASILY BY THE THAI IF IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THAILAND IS BEING SINGLED OUT AND SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED FROM AN ONGOING WORLDWIDE PROGRAM. THAT MAP IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE IS, I AM CONFIDENT, UNDERSTOOD BY GENERAL KRIANGSAK AND OTHER SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, AS WELL AS BY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIALS, ALTHOUGH THE THAI MILITARY STILL TEND TO BELIEVE THAT THE U.S. SHOULD MAKE SOME SPECIAL CONCESSIONS FOR THAILAND.

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2. AS PART OF THE PREPARATION PROCESS, I HAVE MADE A NUMBER OF SPEECHES IN RECENT WEEKS TO THE USUAL FORA - CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, ROTARY, ETC. - AND HAVE USED THOSE OCCASIONS TO SCOTCH, IN UNEQUIVOCAL TERMS, RUMORS CONCERNING THE RETURN OF U.S. MILITARY FORCES TO THAILAND, WHILE REITERATING THE CONTINUING FRIENDSHIP, INTEREST AND CONCERN OF THE U.S. IN AN INTERVIEW CARRIED IN THE

THAI PRESS MARCH 10, I WAS REPORTED AS SAYING THE U.S. WAS REDUCING MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO THAILAND AND CUTTING DOWN ON FOREIGN MILITARY SALES. THE ARTICLE QUOTED OTHER SOURCES AS REPORTING AMERICAN MILITARY AID HAD BEEN STEADILY REDUCED IN THE PAST THREE YEARS. THE ARTICLE ELSEWHERE RECORDED FY-77 SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEVELS (\$16 MILLION MAP, \$30 MILLION FMS CREDITS) AND STATED "LOWER FIGURES HAVE BEEN REQUESTED FOR FISCAL 1978 BUT IT IS NOT KNOWN WHAT FINAL FIGURES WILL BE APPROVED BY CONGRESS." THE SAME ARTICLE ALSO MENTIONED THE U.S. IS PHASING DOWN MILITARY ASSISTANCE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

3. AT THIS TIME, WHEN THE THAI ARE EXTREMELY UNCERTAIN ABOUT OUR INTENTIONS TOWARD THEM, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD AVOID ANY SPECIAL DEMARCHE ON THIS SUBJECT. I AND APPROPRIATE MISSION OFFICERS IN THE NORMAL CONDUCT OF OUR RELATIONS CAN AND WILL EXPLAIN THE TERMINATION OF GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE AFTER FY-78. WITH THE GROUNDWORK THAT ALREADY HAS BEEN LAID, I FEEL WE CAN BRING THE MESSAGE ACROSS TO THE RTG WITHOUT UNDUE TRAUMA TO OUR RELATIONSHIP.

4. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT OTHER FACTORS ARE PERHAPS MORE CRITICAL THAN THE CONTINUATION OF MAP. AS I INDICATED ABOVE, IF MAP IS DISCONTINUED ROUND THE WORLD, THE THAI WILL ACCEPT THE TERMINATION HERE IN THAT CONTEXT; HOWEVER, IF IT APPEARS THE THAI HAVE BEEN SINGLED OUT FOR SOME REASON OR THE OTHER, THIS COULD BE READ ONLY AS A SIGNAL OF OUR DISINTEREST OVER THEIR SECURITY. I BELIEVE IT IS SAFE TO SAY THAT OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES WOULD REACH THE SAME CONCLUSION. AS YOU ARE AWARE FROM AMBASSADOR NEWSOM'S RECENT EXCHANGE WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO AND FROM ANALYSES YOU ELICITED FROM U.S. AMBASSADORS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD, THE SECURITY OF
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THAILAND IS MUCH ON THE MINDS OF THESE GOVERNMENTS AND IS CONSIDERED THE COUNTRY IN EAST ASIA WHOSE SECURITY IS MOST DIRECTLY THREATENED AT THIS TIME.

5. IN SUM, I FEEL CONFIDENT WE CAN HANDLE THE TERMINATION OF MAP PROBLEM WITH MINIMAL DIFFICULTY, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE THAI ARE FAIRLY WELL PREPARED AND BECAUSE, I ASSUME, IT WILL NOT APPEAR THAT THAILAND IS BEING SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED FROM GRANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WHICH OTHERS ARE RECEIVING. I DO FEEL THAT SO LONG AS THE MAP AND FMS PROGRAMS CONTINUE, THAILAND SHOULD GET SOME PART OF THE PIE.

6. THE THAI ARE AWARE ALSO THAT EXISTING LEGISLATION CALLS FOR THE TERMINATION OF JUSMAGS AFTER FY-77 EXCEPT WITH THE SPECIFIC AUTHORIZATION OF CONGRESS. AN EARLY PROPOSAL TO THE CONGRESS FOR CONTINUATION OF JUSMAGTHAI WOULD BE REASSURING TO THE RTG AND HELP ALLAY THE CONCERN OVER WHAT POLICY THE U.S. INTENDS TO PURSUE IN THIS AREA.

7. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO JAKARTA FOR
AMBASSADOR NEWSOM.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INSTRUCTIONS, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, GRANTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGKO05459
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: OA
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840084-5459, N770002-0064
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770364/aaaacegk.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a88624b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 77 STATE 55153, 77 STATE 44414, 77 STATE 43000, 77 STATE 41170
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3122926
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FUTURE OF MAP FOR THAILAND
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, US, TH
To: STATE JAKARTA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a88624b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009